WOMAN'S CROWN
and other
SACRED SONGS
by M. Edghill
with a Preface by
the Countess Waldegrave

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WOMAN'S CROWN AND OTHER SACRED SONGS.

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Woman's Crown and other Sacred Songs, by . . . . . M. Edghill, with a Preface by the Countess Waldegrave.

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INTRODUCTION.

I have written this little book, I may say, on my knees, for every line of it has been prayed over, and I now send it out with an earnest prayer that it may be blest by God and be of some use to those who read it. There are many people perhaps who have not time or inclination to read solid books, and yet who may read a book of this kind, which, though the subjects are solemn enough, is in itself light reading. All the cases I have depicted under the Fourth Word from the Cross ("My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?") have at one time or other come to my knowledge in my own work and experience, and therefore it is presumable that there are many others like them, and it is my most earnest desire to help such. Should the book commend itself to those who read it, may I venture to ask them to recommend it to others, and thus help in promoting its sale, as I am giving all the proceeds to the needy and suffering.

That God may deign to use this little work, which has been written for His glory, the spread of His truth, and the helping of souls, is my unceasing prayer.

M. EDGHILL.

Soulby,

Weston-super-Mare.

PREFACE.

THE intention of this book of simple verse is to let in light and sunshine for those who suffer or have suffered, it may be, from loss of some they love, or from personal suffering in mind or body, and who feel that everything for them is dark and sad. There is a strain of tenderness and sympathy all through the book, tenderness and sympathy that is the outcome of experience and knowledge. The writer has been constantly brought into contact with sad and sorely-wounded hearts and broken spirits, and with penitents who feel that the burden of their sin is more than they can bear, yet have not grasped the endless mercy, the infinite love and tenderness of God.

In the first part, "Woman's Crown and other Sacred Songs," there are many verses that will appeal to sad and weary hearts, "A Song in Three Parts," "Patience," "The Hermit," "Resignation," "The Comforter," and "A Soul's Conflict," are all full of tenderness and understanding sympathy, but above these should be placed the little poem called "Life." This touches on

the saddest phase of human life, when the brain is ill and beyond the control of reason or will, and when the sufferer is often plunged into an abyss of misery and hopeless despair, and feels himself to be utterly beyond the pale. For those who have friends suffering from this saddest of all innocent suffering, these touching verses will be balm.

In the second part of the volume there is a poem entitled, "Everyone that is perfect shall be as his Master," and in it a truth, often forgotten, is brought out—that if we love our Lord and Master we must be prepared to suffer as He suffered, the love entails pain as well as joy and peace, we must drink the cup of sorrow before we win the crown of victory.

One of the last songs is "It is finished," a triumph song, full of faith and rejoicing; and so through this little book of verses, the reader is led, as it were, from sin and pain and sorrow, as taught by the Passion of the Lord, to the healing of all wounds by His wounds, through the grave and gate of death by His death, to the sure and certain hope of pardon and a joyful resurrection by His resurrection, who died that we might live.

MARY D. WALDEGRAVE.

CHEWTON PRIORY,

BATH,

November, 1909.

WOMAN'S CROWN.

As Mary kneels in silent prayer,
Her heart and spirit Heav'nward soar,
And things of sense are known no more,
And only things Divine are there.

Her soul aflame with holy fire,
She gazes upward to the sky,
With love and rapture in her eye,
Her being filled with one desire,

Her Heav'nly Father to obey,
No matter what His Will should ask,
Unmindful how severe the task,
How dark the road, how steep the way.

No sound the evening silence stirred,
And all is peace and calm and hush,
When suddenly, the gentle rush
Of wings upon the air is heard.

And standing by her side is one,
Majestic, holy, full of grace,
The Heav'nly glory in his face,
A glory which outshines the sun.

Awestruck she listens to his voice,
Which on her wond'ring ears did fall:
"Hail, woman, blessed more than all,
On whom the Lord hath fix'd His choice!

The Lord is with thee, have no fear,
For favour thou with God hast found."
She bows herself upon the ground,
Not yet to her the meaning clear.

"The Holy Ghost shall thee o'ershade,
A sacred Child be born of thee,
Unending shall His power be,
A kingdom on His Shoulders laid.

And God the throne to Him shall give
Of David, ancient Judah's king,
And wills it that This Holy Thing
The name of Jesus shall receive."

A solemn stillness fills the air,
The very harps of Heaven are dumb
And silent, till the answer come
From that meek maiden kneeling there

And shall the wondrous end be this
To all that she from God had sought,
In humbleness of heart and thought,
In hours of prayer and dreams of bliss?

To be the Mother of the Lord,
The Stem of Jesse, Sharon's Rose,
The Vanquisher of Israel's foes,
The long'd-for Christ, th' Incarnate Word?

But wait—to save the chosen race,
This maiden with a spotless name,
Must be accredited with shame,
And cruel accusations face!

Together with the joy and crown,
A sacrifice her God demands;
Can she accept this from His Hands,
The risk of losing fair renown?

Must she before her kith and kin
Misjudged, mistaken, slighted be,
And He Who sets the sinful free,
Be thought to owe His Birth to sin?

What was the gift she sought but now?
A lowly heart, surrender'd will,
Come weal or woe, come good or ill,
And shall she not perform her vow?

Abandoned to this thought alone,
Her face upturned to God on high,
With arms outstretch'd to draw Him nigh,
She, waiting, kneels before the Throne.

She speaks: "Thine handmaid, Lord, behold,"
And angels bow themselves to hear
Her accents sweet and low and clear,
And wait to strike their harps of gold.

"According to Thy holy word,
Let this thing unto me befall."
The Angels to each other call,
And strike their harps with one accord!

And through the Heav'nly mansions fair,
And up the glorious steeps of light,
And reaching on from height to height,
That answer fill'd the list'ning air.

For 'tis not loud and clamourous voice
That up in realms of bliss is heard,
But *wills*, by love and reverence stirr'd,
That make the Heart of God rejoice.

And waiting there, with yielded heart,
She now, of God's redemptive plan,
Wrought out in love for fallen man,
Becomes a living, loving part.

And thus the slur on Woman's name
Of having caused mankind to fall,
Is done away with, once for all,
For Jesus through a woman came.

Through Eve inherits she a share
In lowering man's first estate;
Through Mary is her glory great,
For Mary man's Redeemer bare.

And yet another truth we find,
For though alone to Mary came
The special honour, praise and fame,
They now are shared by Womankind.

And when we read 'twas Woman who
Brought to the world both sin and death,
We know another Scripture saith
She brought the world's Redeemer too.

Not only was the honour done
To Mary, lowly Jewish maid,
But on the sex was honour laid,
For Jesus Christ is Woman's Son.

O Woman, listen to my song,
To whom this heritage He gave,
And strive a ruined world to save,
From folly, vanity and wrong.

And grieve not Him Who took such care
Once more thy Womanhood to raise,
But offer Him a life of praise,
Of loving work and ceaseless prayer.

And let no Tempter drag thee down,
Or lay thy priceless honour low,
Let no false friend nor open foe
Have power to rob thee of thy crown.

A SONG IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

"It is I, be not afraid."—St. Mark vi. 50.

When troubles come, what comfort it would bring,
How from our sorrow it would take the sting,
If we could realize the Love of God,
And see His Hand behind the chast'ning rod.

When in a garden fair the pruner stands,
Holding the pruning knife within his hands,
Will he spend labour on a withered tree,
Or hope on dying stems sweet flowers to see?

Nay, he will search for living plants and fair,
Which year by year an ample fruitage bear,
And these must, shuddering, feel the pruning blade,
Which on each branch by practised hand is laid.

But all along the sharp unerring knife
Quivers the gardener's love—and fuller life
Is given to the shorn and suffering stem,
Where oozing sap now sparkles as a gem.

Well chosen were the wounds he came to give
To trees and plants, which in his garden live,
And when another year he comes again,
He'll see his loving work was not in vain.

Love was his motive and his wisdom deep,
For, fearful lest the fruitful life should sleep
In those dear plants, he stripp'd them stark and bare
Of all the useless tendrils growing there.

For they the strength and goodness take away,
And hinder fruit from coming, if they stay;
And so he pruned with loving stroke and true,
And through his care the garden richer grew.

And so it is with God, the Gardener great,
Who visiteth His garden, soon or late,
And gazing tenderly on every spray,
Cuts here a branch, and there, and goes His way,

And watches from His Home beyond the sky,
And sends the loving message, "It is I"
Who came and took that cherished thing from thee,
Because it drew thy heart away from Me.

I saw that if that treasur'd idol stay,
It would at last bring ruin and decay,
And thou would'st barren and unfruitful grow,
And all thy heart be fixed on things below.

Deem not as cruel what I do in love,
Because what thou wouldst keep, I did remove,
Just think what thou wouldst do with thine own child
If other loves his heart from thee beguiled,

And thou didst know that from his highest gain,
He was cut off—and nought but grief and pain
Must follow, if that lov'd usurper stay—
Would'st thou not take that hurtful thing away?

Yes, it was I who came and snatched from thee
That toy, that treasure—that thou might'st be free
From trammels which would hold thee in their grip,
And from thee all thy heav'nly treasures strip.

I never grudged to lost and sinful man
My only Son, but gave Him for a span
To dwell below, and clothed in human guise,
To live and die, that fallen man might rise.

I heard the savage mob which round Him surged,
(While wantonly His tender Flesh they scourged),
Insulting cry: "Thou, King of Israel, Hail!"
And saw them, ruthless, strike the cruel nail.

And yet behind the Jews who took His life,
Behind the tumult, jealousy and strife,
He saw the cup which I had bade Him drink,
And from His Cross and Passion would not shrink.

I saw them raise the splinter'd Cross on high,
On which, for sin's atonement He must die,
His thorn-crown'd Head exposed to scorching rays,
While men, unmoved, upon His suffering gaze;

And when there came a moment darker still,
When all the air with anguish seemed to thrill,
And He was left alone in deep despair,
With sin and its reward, for man to bear,

Did I not suffer, think you, on My Throne,
And agonize for Him, thus left alone?
What, therefore, must my love for sinners be,
If, for their sakes, I could such torment see?

Could I, all heedless of their pain, destroy
Dear human lives, or rob them of their joy?
It was in *love* I dealt the chast'ning blow,
That thou less bound to things of earth shouldst grow.

Call not thy many troubles, small or great,
Thy pain distress or sorrow—cruel fate—
Thy Father's Voice, from out the dark'ning sky,
Sounds clear and gentle saying: "It is I."

Part II.

"*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.*"—St. Matt. xxv. 40.

One Holy Friday, many years ago,
As I sat list'ning to the story sad,
Of all our Blessed Saviour's grief and woe,
A thought possessed my mind which made me glad.

That scene which on the first Good Friday passed
Before the Holy Eyes of Heaven's Lord,
At which the weeping angels stood aghast,
Woke in my heart a new and thrilling chord.

I seemed to stand upon that road of grief,
And see that dread procession passing by,
And long'd to bring the Saviour some relief,
As with His Cross He went His way to die.

And when at length too grievous and too great
Became the task that He was called to do,
And He, exhausted, falls beneath the weight
Of that grim Cross, my yearning deeper grew.

Is there not one among that motley crowd
Who, seeing His distress, will help Him rise?
Are all those standing by too hard and proud
To come to His relief before He dies?

How many He has healed and saved and taught!
He ne'er could do, for other's good, enough;
O think what joy and happiness He brought
To many in that crowd so rude and rough!

And now—when He lies bleeding on the ground,
Can we believe it?— no one comes to aid
That suffering victim— no one can be found
To touch that Cross, they on His Shoulders laid!

Here was a moment, ne'er to come again,
An opportunity, which standers by
In that assembly lost—to ease the pain
Of Jesus Christ,—the Son of God most High!

The Saviour needs their help!—can this be true
That He should need it, and that no one there,
In all that careless, flippant, noisy crew,
Who at that scene of grief and sorrow stare,

Will hasten now—and bending o'er His Form,
Give all the strength and comfort they possess,
And do their utmost to relieve the storm
Of wounded love, now surging in His Breast?

But no, a passing stranger they compel
That help to render and that Cross to bear,
Who knew not Jesus, and who could not tell
Why he should of His burden take a share.

O happy stranger! Little didst thou know
The glory and the honour granted thee,
When on thy shoulders they did roughly throw
The Cross of Him Who died on Calvary.

And do *we* know and fully realize,
Whose Cross we bear when other men we aid,
Or help to still the world's heart-broken cries,
Which in our ears unceasingly are made?

When we that sick or dying one attend,
Or gently soothe with balm the aching heart,
Or to the lost and erring prove a friend—
In bearing Jesu's Cross we take a part.

For do the Holy Scriptures not reveal
That wondrous truth, that they His members be?
And thus when helping others we may feel
We help *Him* on His way to Calvary.

When first I listen'd 'twas with bitter shame,
To think how heartless was the chosen race,
That none among that great procession came,
If but to wipe the blood from off His Face.

And I with deep, unspeakable regret
Was filled, that now there never could return
That priceless chance, when Christ and Israel met,
And they His need of help did idly spurn—

Did none in all that city feel remorse,
When hanging on the shameful Tree of scorn,
No cruelty or pain could Jesus force
To utter *one* reproach that fearful morn?

And then there came the thought that gave me joy—
The chance they lost, for us can ever last,
For we can all our gifts and time employ
To help Him, though that awful day be past.

For every time we lift a brother's load,
Or cheer for him a sad and cloudy day,
Not him alone we help along the road,
But Christ, the Man of Sorrows, on His way.

In every suffering soul we chance to meet,
We may our Saviour in His Passion see,
And on our ears shall fall the message sweet:
"In helping him, ye do it unto Me."

Part III.

"*Why persecutest thou Me?*"—Acts ix. 4.

Behold along the hot and dusty way
Towards Damascus, travellers are seen,
But hotter than the sun, their wrath that day
Against disciples of the Nazarene.

They hold within their hands the letters dire,
Which shall the servants of the Lord consign
To tyrant's flashing steel or cruel fire,
Or will in dungeon dark the saints confine.

They hasten on with misdirected zeal,
While thinking they were righteous in their deeds;
Save one, who felt unrest he would conceal,
But which his troubled mind reluctant, heeds.

And now at last they near the city gate,
When suddenly there shines a glorious light,
Compelling them upon their road to wait,
So dazzling and so startling was the sight—

And then there came a Voice from out the sky,
A Voice which made all other voices dumb,
Which asked of Saul, in tones of pleading, why
To persecute the Saviour he had come.

To persecute the Lord! O can this be?
Ah yes, the awful sentence sounds again,
Distinct and clear: "Thou persecutest *Me*,
On *M*e thou dost inflict this bitter pain!"

* * * * * *

With this I close my song of threefold thought.
When we unkindness to another show,
'Gainst us the accusation shall be brought
That it was Christ the Lord we treated so

O ye who cause another grief and pain,
Your anger or your hate to gratify,
Think—'tis your Lord you persecute again,
As Saul of Tarsus did in days gone by.

And when we to another soul deny,
The joy and help our sympathy might bring,
Or stop our ears to stifle suffering's cry;
We do to Jesus Christ a cruel thing.

And if we fail our brother to relieve,
Who hungers in this world of want and woe,
And will not of our own abundance give;
Our Lord it is we make to hunger so.

And when on beds of suffering dire we see
Our brothers and our sisters restless lie,
We might do well in awe to bow the knee,
For 'tis the Man of Sorrows passing by.

O Ye, who on self-pleasing spend your all,
And thoughtlessly your brethren's wants neglect,
Those solemn words that Jesus spoke recall,
And see the warning ye do not reject.

If His poor suffering members here below,
We banish from our heart's affection thus,
A day will come when we shall surely know
The King of Glory is ashamed of us.

* * * * * *

Our God it is, Who lays at times His Hand
Upon the things we prize, that we may grow
More fixed in heart upon the Heav'nly Land,
More weaned from earth, less set on things below

* * * * * *

We comfort Him when comforting the sad,
Or share our brother's burdens, hard to lift,
Or when we make an anxious heart feel glad
By tender sympathy or loving gift.

* * * * * *

And once again 'tis He we pain and slight,
When dealing insult, blows or cold neglect
To those we pass, "as ships pass in the night,"
Who at our hand more love and care expect.

* * * * * *

He calls us through His members here on earth,
To render Him some service small or great,
But as of old, men scorned His lowly birth,
We oft our God perceive, alas, too late.

And thus the threefold cord we now unite,
And may the simple thoughts herein expressed
Bring comfort, joy, and warning to our sight,
And to each reader's heart by God be blest.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

"*In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*"—Matthew ii. 18.

We stand aghast before the page
On which, with tearful eye we read
The story dread of Herod's rage,
Of broken hearts and cruel deed.

But there is yet a darker day,
The day the world's Redeemer died ;
When voices loud and clam'rous say :
"O let this Man be crucified."

But some among the children born
The year the Holy Saviour came,
Could never lift their voice in scorn,
Or bring reproach on Israel's name.

For they were saved, by dying young,
From cursing God, and being curs'd,
Or standing where the Saviour hung,
And scoffing at His pain and thirst.

Thus in the anguish and the grief,
Which mothers felt in days of yore,
There is one thought which brings relief,
When reading that sad history o'er.

For up in Heaven, that martyr band
Were singing praise to God on high,
While here below, on every hand,
The mob were crying, "Crucify!"

And thus a remnant of the race,
The dear Redeemer came to win,
Was rescued from the deep disgrace
Of sharing Israel's crowning sin.

* * * * * *

And when, with tear-dimm'd eye, we stood
Beside the little churchyard mound,
And scarce could feel that God was good,
In dealing us so deep a wound;

Might we not too some comfort see,
That ne'er entangled in the mesh
Of sin, could this our darling be,
Or crucify the Christ afresh?

For though it was with breaking heart
We saw him draw his latest breath,
We know—whate'er it cost to part—
That there are sorrows worse than death—

For what if he had died in sin,
And brought dishonour on our name,
Or spurn'd the love that strove to win
And shield him from a life of shame?

Nor sinning 'gainst himself alone,
Had others into danger led,
And in their hearts had evil sown,
And brought their blood upon his head!

Had lived to scoff beneath the Cross,
On which the world's Redeemer died
To rescue man from endless loss,
And cared not He was crucified!

To follow to a shameful grave
The son or daughter that we love,
And whom we sought in vain to save,
And gently lead to things above,

Is sorrow which no pains of death
  Could bring, or cause us such despair,
For we must speak with bated breath
  Of that poor wand'rer, lying there.

" Ah yes," I hear a mother say,
  Who stands beside the coffin lid,
'Neath which one sad and bitter day
  The darling of her heart was hid ;

" Ah yes, but I can also see
  Another picture fair and bright,
A life which might a blessing be,
  Cut off too soon and closed in night.

A life of usefulness and prayer,
  In works of love and mercy spent,
A sunny life, and free from care,
  Which was to gladden others meant—

A life to raise and cheer the sad,
  And lift the burdens hard to bear,
And make the heavy-hearted glad,
  By taking of their load a share.

All this and more they might have been
  These little ones, who early die,
Why should we dream that they by sin
  The Lord afresh should crucify ? "

Yes—" might have been ! " That solemn word
  Has wrung the Heart of God with pain
A thousand times, when He has heard
  Us long to live our lives again.

" If I a holy mother had,
  A better man I ' might have been,'
With love to make my childhood glad,
  And counsel sweet, on which to lean."

" And if— " I hear another say,
" I that companion had not met,
And gone with him that evil day
I ' might have been ' an honour yet

To those who mourn'd my downward course,
And sought with tears my love to win ;
But now my portion is remorse
In thinking what I ' might have been.'

And so we could a hundred more
Their useless longings hear relate,
While they their misspent life deplore,
And blame another for their fate.

But that is not our purpose here—

* * * * * *

The thoughts from which we solace gain,
While weeping o'er the little bier,
Is this, that nothing now can stain
The soul of him we hold so dear.

Fair might his life have been, we know,
But all uncertain was the end,
And we might learn through grief and woe,
That death in youth had been a friend—

It is the precious certainty
Which comforts us in days of grief,
That now and through eternity,
Though here on earth their time was brief,

Our children in the Heav'nly Land
Are safe, and through the endless days,
Amid the glorious angel band,
They sing their great Redeemer's praise ;

That never sin or grief or pain
  Can wreck their life, or mar their joy,
For where the saints and angels reign,
  No danger can their peace destroy.

Cut off, you say! We cannot tell
  What holy work their life has done
For those who watch'd and loved them well,
  Although their days had scarce begun.

For grief and sorrow, bravely borne,
  Shall work in us eternal gain,
And he who from our arms was torn—
  Who dares to say he lived in vain?

For if his loss *this* victory won,
  That we to God submissive grew,
And learnt to say, "Thy will be done,"
  His work was great, his days though few.

Think not that broken is the tie,
  For holy love doth ever last;
To live in hearts is not to die,
  Although the River has been passed.

I am not one with those who say
  That God has meant us not to feel;
No grief, or comfort find their way,
  Or lessons teach to hearts of steel.

I only sing my little song,
  Because it bitter is to me,
That we should do our Father wrong,
  And call His dealings cruelty.

And solace too I fain would bring
  To hearts bow'd down with anguish sore,
That they may yet rejoice and sing,
  And learn some truth unknown before.

And now, dear reader, we must part;
God grant these words of mine may ring,
A joy-bell in some lonely heart
Where winter's breath has banish'd Spring.

PATIENCE.

Another day of pain is past,
And now I lift my prayer to Thee
On Whom this morn my soul I cast,
And prayed that I might patient be.

We read of warriors bold who fight
With spear and musket, sword and shield,
But pain endured by day and night
Makes each sick room a battlefield.

Lord, can I do no work for Thee
As on my bed I prostrate lie?
Ah yes, by suffering patiently,
I can Thy dear Name glorify.

To some Thou gavest strength and health,
While weary months I here have lain,
To some prosperity and wealth,
To me the work of bearing pain.

They watched Thee on Thy shameful Cross
To hear Thee curse Thy God and die,
And while on beds of pain we toss,
We too are watched by passers by.

And should we stubborn hearts display,
And murmur 'neath the chast'ning rod,
Or sullen grow and cease to pray,
We bring dishonour on our God.

Then think not, ye who suffer pain,
That ye are wholly cast aside,
Or useless are, and live in vain
And profit not the Lord Who died—

For we may show, for other's good,
Who watch and wait around our bed,
And have in suffering by us stood—
That we with strength Divine are fed.

And as through life they wend their way,
If pain's sad path we bravely trod
With Christian patience—they may say:
"That truly was a child of God!"

THE HERMIT.

(A Story told of a Mediæval Preacher.)

A holy man of God, one winter's night,
Sat meditating by the flickering light
Of his small fire. He dwelt upon the love
Which brought our Saviour down from Heav'n above,
Who saw beneath defiling stains of sin
God's Image still, in hearts He fain would win.
And as that wondrous truth within him burnt,
He heard a Voice: "Go, preach what thou hast learnt,
Go preach it in a certain narrow street,
To which My Spirit shall direct thy feet."
At first he thought he dreamed, and did not go,
He shrank too from the bitter wind and snow,
And musing still he took once more his place
Beside the fire which shone upon his face.
The monk was old and much of life had seen,
And oft had felt the disappointment keen
Of preaching and of working all in vain
For souls our Blessed Saviour died to gain;

And now he felt his pilgrimage was o'er,
And, save for prayer, need toil and strive no more.
But hark! again the Voice speaks loud and clear:
"Arise and preach, for souls to God are dear,
Go where I bid thee, make no more delay,
God's servants still must work as well as pray."
He rose, and feebly stumbling to the door,
Sought for his staff and went to preach once more.
He battled with the storm, and as he went,
One street, and one alone, he felt was meant,
And to that place he bends his footsteps slow,
Assured that he, to preach Christ there, must go.
Anon he halted 'twixt the houses tall,
And thick and fast the snow began to fall,
And then in pleading tones the silence broke,
Though none he saw to hear the words he spoke.
He told how sins like crimson, could that night
Be washed in Jesu's Blood as clean and white
As that pure snow, now falling on the ground;
How chains by which our sinful souls are bound,
Could yet be loosed by grace and power Divine,
And heav'nly pardon on the sinner shine;
That none, however stained, need yet despair,
For God is Love, and casts not out the prayer
Of penitence and sorrow for the past,
But saveth all who come to Him at last.
Ne'er was this hermit's heart more deeply stirred,
Although he thought that none his preaching heard,
For not a soul was seen in that dark street,
No man or woman did that preacher meet!
His sermon ended and his mission o'er,
The monk returned to his poor home once more,
And as he on his pillow laid his head,
And thought again of all that he had said,
The mystery grew still deeper to his mind,
Nor could he, though he tried, a reason find
Why he to preach, with not a soul in sight,

Was sent to such a place that stormy night ;
Yet he was sure that had he not obeyed,
Some purpose, unrevealed, had been delayed ;
And with a fervent prayer that God would keep
Him humble and obedient, fell asleep.

* * * * * *

Up in an attic bare, the daylight flown,
A weary woman, sad and all alone,
Crouch'd by the window, mourning o'er her fate,
And in her grief believing that too late
Had come repentance for a life of sin,
That never could she now forgiveness win,
That all was lost, and only death remained ;
For who could rescue now a soul so stained ?
The snow was falling and the night was dark,
No sound upon the air was heard, when hark !
A voice, just 'neath the window where she kneels,
Speaks loud and clear—and in her heart she feels
The loving words a message hold for her,
And list'ning breathlessly, she did not stir.
O what was this she heard ? Could it be true
That Christ could pardon—and her heart renew ?
That He had died and shed His Blood to save
Poor sin-stained souls who for His mercy crave ?
That even such as she might rise once more
And, filled with sorrow deep, His grace implore ?
Who was this man who came this wintry night
To preach God's Love, with not a soul in sight ?
She searched her brain, and as she wept and thought,
A dim remembrance to her mind was brought,
How in the days gone by she once had heard
That voice before, which had her conscience stirred,
When she, an idle hour to beguile,
Had listen'd to a preacher for a while,
Who stood and spoke upon the dusty way,
And pleaded with the passers-by that day
To come to Jesus, merciful and great,

Who longed their souls to save, and still did wait
Outside the door of every human heart,
And gaining entrance, would new life impart ;
And not so long ago she heard it said
That this same man, who from the world had fled,
Had come to live in dwelling mean and poor,
Not far removed from her own humble door.
So she resolved to leave the wretched street,
And cast herself in sorrow at his feet,
And in his ear her sad confession pour,
And all her life of sin and shame deplore.
And there she sought, while kneeling on the ground,
God's pardon, which through Christ, can aye be found.
And thus the aged monk was shewn at last
Why He was sent by God to face the blast,
And preach forgiveness through the cleansing Tide
Which flowed from out the Saviour's pierced Side.

* * * * * *

And may we not in this strange story find
Much help and teaching for the thoughtful mind ?
We grow dejected and we think at last,
Our work and usefulness in life are past ;
But we to watch and pray should never cease,
Nor let our *willingness* to work decrease ;
For God may call us yet to do our part,
And sow the Heav'nly seed in some poor heart—
We need the ready mind, the listening ear
To know God's message and His Voice to hear,
That we in turn may speak for Him to men,
And know too, *how* to speak, and *where* and *when*.
And though we know not why He bids us go
To do some work, He yet will one day show
The meaning—if not here, in that bright Land
When we around the Throne of God shall stand,
And there shall meet some soul we strove to win,
And through God's blessing, saved from death and sin.
And by our lives and actions we can preach,

And not alone by eloquence of speech;
For many men have sought, and sought in vain,
To meet a faith which shall their own sustain,
And see, as through this wilderness they trod,
Some life which strengthened their belief in God.

RESIGNATION.

O Jesu, Who Thyself didst weep
With those who mourn'd in anguish deep,
Do Thou Thy servants guard and keep,
O loving Saviour, hear!

We longed our loved one to retain,
But we the cup of grief must drain,
Though able scarce to bear the pain,
O loving Christ, be near!

How can we, with a breaking heart,
In work or pleasure take a part?
Thy Hand alone can heal the smart,
O loving Saviour dear!

We would not strive to drown the past,
But rather let grief's lesson last,
And on Thee all our sorrow cast,
O loving Saviour hear!

Nor yet despairing, sink below
Our weight of care, our load of woe,
But trust—and through Thy chast'ning grow
To Thee, O Christ, more near.

Thy teaching shall not be in vain,
And comfort mingles with our pain,
For loss to *us*, to *him* is gain,
O loving Saviour dear!

And he we know, will ne'er forget
The ones he loved, and loveth yet,
And while our eyes with tears are wet,
We feel he still is near.

Now we in hope our darling lay
In earth's embrace, and go our way,
Till dawns the Resurrection Day,
When dried is every tear.

And while there still is work to do
For Thee, and others suffering too,
We'll rise through pain, to strive anew
To serve Thee, Saviour dear.

LIFE.

Life is like a wondrous journey
Over land and over sea,
Fraught with danger, fraught with sweetness,
Ofttimes full of mystery.

Many on this journey meet us,
Some continue by our side,
Others linger but a moment,
Asking us to be their guide.

Some are sad and some are weary,
Some are false and some are true,
Some seek only joy and comfort;
Some find loving work to do.

Help is often sorely needed
By the travellers on the road,
Who can make but little progress,
Bending 'neath their heavy load.

Some have miss'd the path and wandered
From the " strait and narrow way " ;
Many too are broken-hearted,
Though appearing bright and gay.

Some disdain the help we offer,
All too proud and wayward they,
Spurning love and kindly counsel,
Choosing their own wilful way.

All are hurrying on their journey,
But what different aims they seek !
Many wish the journey ended,
Finding heart and nerve too weak.

One I met most sweet and gentle,
Laden with a weight of care,
For a cloud sat on his spirit,
Filling it with black despair.

Thinking he was God-forsaken,
He in sorrow ceased to pray,
Came not to the Holy Table
Where our sins are washed away.

He had lost the Heavenly vision,
Could not feel the Father's Hand,
Thought he must himself, unbidden,
Banish to the " silent land."

So they had to guard him closely,
For his own and others' sake,
And no more I now behold him
On the journey that I take.

But I never can forget him,
Never cease for him to pray ;
Every night I wonder vainly
How has passed for him the day.

Ere he went he sat beside me,
Held my hand with fond embrace,
Thanked me for my love and pity,
Pressed a kiss upon my face.

O what sadness, past enduring,
Would our fainting spirits know,
Did we say farewell for ever
To our loved ones here below!

Now we have sweet consolation,
Knowing we shall meet again,
Where no sorrow findeth entrance,
No farewells and never pain.

Until then the prayers we offer,
Help to lift those dear ones up,
And they still partake, unknowing,
Of the Sacramental Cup.

For these souls who grope in darkness,
Yet are branches of the Vine,
And their spirits still are strengthened
By the sacred Bread and Wine.

Precious words by Christ are spoken,
Telling of the mystic tie
Which exists between His children,
For whose life He came to die.

He the Stem and they the branches,
Closer union could not be,
And to those whose minds are clouded,
Channels of God's grace are we.

Never true can this be, surely,
That the means of grace, supplied
By the Lord for man's refreshment,
Are to these poor souls denied.

We can make Communion for them
  At the Heav'nly Father's Board,
In their place can plead the Passion
Of our great Ascended Lord.

In the glorious Resurrection,
  When all spirits find release,
I shall see my friend among them,
  Radiant, happy, filled with peace.

Till that day I wait and worship,
  Holding converse with my Lord,
Leaving all things to His mercy,
  Trusting to His faithful word.

Here I wait till God shall call me
  Into clearer, fuller light,
Where the souls redeemed by Jesus,
  Taught of Him, shall pray aright.

Here we through a glass see darkly,
  Here we ofttimes ask amiss,
But our minds will be illumined
  In the realms of endless bliss.

Very solemn is life's journey,
  Fateful is the path we tread,
We can by our words and actions
  Light or darkness round us shed.

Once I was myself in trouble,
  Hard and cruel was the fight,
Till a fellow traveller met me,
  Shared my load and made it light.

What I should have done without her
  O my God, I do not know,
She was like a rock in ocean
  'Gainst which tempests vainly blow.

From each other we are sundered,
East and West our lots are cast,
But that precious, holy friendship
Through the endless years will last.

On this theme 'tis sweet to linger,
How lives touch each other here,
Here a moment—*then* for ever,
In a holier, happier sphere.

We can make the journey harder
For those travelling by our side,
Or we may to Heav'nly mansions
Others' weary footsteps guide.

Jesu, fill our hearts with pity
As along life's way we press,
That the poor and sad and weary
Feel their heavy burdens less.

Give us tears to shed with mourners,
Give us words to cheer the sad,
Help us make, each day that passes,
Some poor fellow traveller glad.

Then at last when life is ended,
And our journey here is o'er,
Round Thy Throne we all shall gather
On the bright, eternal shore.

"*The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost.*"—St. John xiv. 26.

Comforter Divine and tender,
Sent from above,
Who Thy help dost ever render
In patient love ;
In temptation stand beside us,
Comfort, strengthen, shield and guide us,
Succour Thou hast ne'er denied us,
O Heav'nly Dove !

Thou with souls art ever striving,
Seeking to win
Those who Thee away are driving
By wilful sin ;
On our hearts Thy blessings shower,
Help us in each trial hour,
May we feel Thy mighty power,
Working within.

Let Thy gentle Voice direct us,
Thy wisdom lead,
May Thy loving Arm protect us
In times of need,
Thou, in danger, ne'er forsake us,
Under Thy safe shelter take us,
Through Thine own indwelling make us
Victors indeed.

Giver of all holy teaching,
Sight to the blind,
All the humble-hearted reaching,
Loving and kind ;
What we know not, Thou art showing,
Wisdom, truth and life bestowing ;
Streams of grace for ever flowing,
In Thee we find.

Thou for those art ever praying
Who Thee defied,
Who repentance are delaying
In foolish pride.
We would join Thy interceding,
That they to Thy gentle leading,
May surrender, and Thy pleading
No more deride.

All is darkness if Thou leave us,
Deeper than night,
Of Thy Presence ne'er bereave us,
When fierce the fight ;

Round us all is desolation,
Only death and condemnation,
If we lose the consolation
Of Heav'nly light.

Thou the Blood of Christ applying,
And pardon free,
To the soul for mercy crying
In faith to Thee ;
Suffer not that we, unheeding,
Wound the Love our hearts are needing ;
Point us to the Saviour bleeding
On Calvary's Tree.

All we have not asked through blindness
Or stubborn will,
Grant us in Thy lovingkindness
And patience still ;
May we ne'er, in anger spurning
Thine unutterable yearning,
Hinder Thee from yet returning
Our hearts to fill.

A SOUL'S CONFLICT.

Gird up thyself, my soul, and strive to-day
To please thy Master and His Word obey,
Give no temptation power to cast thee down,
Or rob thee of thy peace or fair renown.

Hard is the battle, and the warfare long,
Weary the conflict, and the foe is strong,
But now, O Christ, to Thee I lift my prayer ;
If Thou art with me, why should I despair ?

Thou in the wilderness, alone didst tread,
The field of battle, with the Tempter dread,
That we might know, in all our conflicts sore,
That Thou, O Lord, hast passed that way before.

Give me Thy Hand to hold, lest I should fall,
Hear me right soon, when I in trouble call,
And let Thy Holy Spirit by me stand,
And guide me safely to the Heavenly Land.

I long to serve Thee, yet the flesh, how weak!
Thy grace and strength supply, O Saviour meek.
O may the temple of my body be
A dwelling-place made fit, dear Lord, for Thee.

Sweet is the peace, which holiness doth win,
Dark is the road of selfishness and sin,
But yet how oft the path of life we lose,
And our own foolish way and wishes choose!

O Heavenly Guide, my sinful soul defend,
For on Thee only dare I now depend,
In days gone by I thought to stand alone
Without Thy help—but now my weakness own.

I fear to leave Thee, leave not me, I pray,
Lest my weak footsteps leave the narrow way.
Be Thou my Helper, stronger than the strong,
For round my pathway deep temptations throng!

E'en while I pray, my thoughts towards them draw,
And clamour loud to serve a lower law,
Save Lord, I perish, hear my bitter cry,
O put Thine Arms around me, lest I die!

And when each day of conflict fierce is done,
If I, through grace, have any victory won,
May I, in humbleness of heart and mind,
With hope press forward, looking not behind.

And when the day of life is sinking down,
And all my past misdeeds upon me frown.
Saviour of sinners, be my hope and stay,
Whose precious Blood has washed my sins away.

O Saviour, ere my soul and body part,
Let love and penitence possess my heart,
That when shall come the awful Judgment hour,
My soul may rest on Thy Redeeming power.

DIVINE HOPE.

A legend sweet, and touching, has been told,
How Jesus, walking down a village street,
Saw groups of children, stooping to behold
Some object lying prostrate at their feet.

And how, on seeing this, Himself drew near,
And gazed upon the sight which met His view.
No wonder that the children shrank with fear,
And surely He will turn with loathing too.

For 'twas the body of a dog, long dead,
And terrible and shocking was the sight,
But looking down upon it, Jesus said:
"His teeth gleam out, still beautiful and white."

'Mid all the putrefaction and decay
The Saviour saw the one redeeming part,
And still He searches through the world to-day
To find some tender spot in every heart.

And we, if we would save our fellow man,
Must never cease to hope at length to find,
Amid the wreckage of God's perfect plan,
Some beauty uneffaced and left behind.

MEDITATIONS ON THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS.

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—St. Luke xxiii. 34.

PART I.

Jesu Christ, for man accurst,
From Whose veins the Life-Blood burst,
Bearing pain and grief and thirst,
Hear us, Holy Jesu.

Nailed upon the Tree of scorn,
Bleeding Head and crown'd with thorn,
God of God yet woman-born,
Hear us, Holy Jesu.

Only prayer Thy silence broke,
Though Thy sufferings ceaseless spoke,
Which no love or pity woke,
Jesu, Holy Jesu!

Then Thy Voice amid the din
Rose to make excuse for sin,
And for man God's pardon win,
Jesu, Holy Jesu!

Only Love Divine and rare
Could have uttered such a prayer
For Thy murderers, shedding there
Thy dear Blood, O Jesu!

PART II.

"*He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*"—
Hebrews vii. 25.

When we sin by word or deed,
For us too, Lord, intercede,
And with God Thy Passion plead,
Borne for us, Lord Jesu.

Still Thy loving words are true,
Many "know not what they do"
When by sin they wound anew
Thy dear Heart, Lord Jesu.

Even we, who something know
What sin cost Thee here below,
Often cold and callous grow
To Thy Love, Lord Jesu.

Thee we slight and grieve again,
Causing Thee once more to drain
Calvary's bitter cup of pain,
Spare us too, Lord Jesu.

May we in Thy loving prayer,
Prayed in anguish, have a share;
For we, like the thoughtless there,
Need Thy mercy, Jesu.

All that Thou didst ever say
Shall not, cannot pass away,
And that prayer which Thou didst pray
Ceaseth never, Jesu.

Spoken once for endless years,
Written large in Blood and Tears,
Ringing in the Father's Ears,
Are Thy words, Lord Jesu.

All the sins beneath the sun
Which, unknowing, man hath done,
Have from God free pardon won
Through that prayer, Lord Jesu.

Now before the Father's Throne
Are Thy wound-prints ever shown,
Which for man's deep sin atone,
Saving us, Lord Jesu.

Looking on Thy loving Face
God beholds the human race
In His Son, Who took our place,
Jesu, Holy Jesu!

Songs of glory, praise and fame,
Raise we now to His dear Name,
Who for man's redemption came,
Jesu, Blessed Jesu!

PART III.

"*Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.*"—1 Peter ii. 21.

When by cruel act or word,
Passions in our hearts are stirred,
May Thy loving Voice be heard,
Chiding us, Lord Jesu.

Nails and Cross and crown of thorn,
Insult, treachery and scorn,
Thou for sinful man hast borne,
O most patient Jesu!

Were *we* called upon to face
Such injustice and disgrace,
Could we pardon acts so base,
Like Thee, Holy Jesu?

May we Thy forbearance heed,
Who ourselves Thy mercy need,
Learning to forgive indeed,
Through Thy grace, Lord Jesu.

Ere our spirits pass away,
Teach us for our foes to pray,
As Thou didst that bygone day,
On Thy Cross, Lord Jesu.

"Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—St. Luke xxiii. 43.

PART I.

"*Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*"—1 Peter iv. 13.

Three crosses standing out against the sky,
And on them men in bitter torment hang,
O let us to that central Cross draw nigh,
From which but now sweet words of mercy rang.
Who is it that can thus so gently speak,
And think of others while in mortal pain,
Who now from loss of blood is faint and weak,
Yet strives in His last hour a soul to gain?
It is the Lord, the King of kings,
Who by His death salvation brings.

A malefactor hangs on either side,
Their awful penalty alike indeed,
They both with Jesus Christ are crucified,
Yet when we year by year that story read,
We see the gulf is broad which lies between
These dying men, who both that suffering bore,
And as we gaze upon that fearful scene
A lesson deep in heart and mind we store:
One bears his cross because he must;
The other owns the suffering just.

O ye who have to drink pain's bitter cup,
Yet all the while rebellion works within,
Unless ye *cheerfully* the cross "take up,"
Ye shall from trials no sweet blessing win;
If while ye bear your cross ye murmur still,
Of Jesu's sufferings ye do not partake,
For only crucifixion of the *will*
Doth precious fellowship with Jesus make.
To bow in faith to God's decree
Sets springs of joy and blessing free.

If when on bitter crosses we are nailed,
We loving discipline do not resent,
Then humbly may we hope we have not failed
To learn the priceless lessons that were meant.
And even here shall we such blessing find,
That ere from earth our spirits pass away,
United *now* to Christ in heart and mind,
We are with Him in Paradise to-day;
Before our pilgrimage is done
We find our Heav'n on earth begun.

And when at length the veil is rent in twain,
And we shall stand on Jordan's further side,
What sweet assurance from His words we gain
That in His Presence we shall then abide!

It is enough that we beyond the grave
Shall be with Him—much else we do not know;
For though to pierce the gloom we mortals crave,
A God of wisdom has not willed it so;
Who die in Christ are ever blest,
And find in Him eternal rest.

Part II.

"*Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*"—St. John vi. 37.

The dying thief in joy and rapture hears
That even he, though stained so deep in soul,
Whose evil deeds have filled his mis-spent years,
May yet, through Love Divine, be cleansed and whole.
Perhaps in bygone years, now past recall,
Which to his mind had grown an outline dim,
A Mother's love had followed him through all,
A Mother's prayers gone up in grief for him.
And now perchance she thinks that all is lost,
Though praying still with tears and breaking heart,
And little dreams Who hath his pathway crossed,
And in his dying hour doth peace impart.
We cannot tell—yet fain would think it so,
And that her many prayers were heard at last;
And surely it must cheer sad hearts to know
That none who mourn for sin away are cast;
That even when repentance is delayed,
And only sorrow felt in dying hours,
The Lord will ne'er that trembling soul upbraid,
But save it at the last from evil Powers.
Yet while we bless and praise God's Holy Son,
Who ne'er from penitence will turn away,
We must remember that 'tis only *one*
That did contrition at the last display,
Who—as we read in God's most Holy Word—
Was pardoned thus, lest man's presumptive pride

Should stop God's warning Voice from being heard,
And from his sight his lost condition hide.
But one—that no man in his heart should dare
To trust to days, when on his bed of death,
He may to meet his God himself prepare,
And make confession with his latest breath.
Yet one—that no man should relinquish hope,
Or think the day of grace is past and gone,
And that he must for aye in darkness grope
For mercy and for love, yet finding none.

O hearken ye, who in presumption think
To give your God the dregs of life and health,
And to the end, of pleasure's cup to drink,
And spend on self your wisdom and your wealth.
A day may come when in a moment's flash
Your reason or your vaunted wealth may cease,
And God may from your hand the goblet dash
Of which ye drank in false and dangerous peace.
And how at such a time will ye repent,
Or make amends to your offended God,
If in the past, the messages He sent
Ye spurned and underfoot unheeding trod?
O bring to Jesus now your load of guilt,
Lest ye should have to plead alas, too late;
Trust in the cleansing Blood which He has spilt,
And do not for "convenient seasons" wait.
God in His mercy and His patience *may*
Give time for penitence ere life is past,
But we must ne'er presume to think or say
It will suffice to turn to Him at last.

But now attend, O soul in deep despair,
That turns from words of mercy and of grace,
That finds in life no joy, no hope in prayer,
No consciousness of rest in God's embrace;
In His most Holy Name we here assert,
And firmly hold the promise true to be,

That if thou e'en the blackest sinner wert,
  There still is pardon through Christ's death for thee,
For oh ! His mercy reacheth to the sky,
  His faithfulness and truth can ne'er grow less ;
He still to contrite sinners draweth nigh
  Who all their past misdeeds with grief confess.
That guilty, sin-stained penitent of yore,
  Who near his Lord was crucified that day,
Owned justice in the punishment he bore,
  And in his dying hour he learnt to pray.
And so may every soul bowed down with woe,
  Come fearlessly before the Throne of Grace,
And learn, though late, the love of God to know,
  Who from the contrite ne'er will turn His Face.

" Woman, behold thy son ! Behold thy mother !—
St. John xix. 26, 27.

PART I.

" He that is obedient unto the Lord shall be a comfort to his mother."—Ecclesiasticus iii. 3.

The hours drag out their weary length
  Beneath the scorching sun,
And painfully ebbs out the strength
  Of God's Anointed One.
There has been silence since He spake
  The words which brought release,
But now from Lips Divine there break
  Yet other words of peace.

In Nazareth for thirty years,
  He had in love obeyed
The Mother whom, now bathed in tears,
  He yet doth seek to aid.
In bygone days He ne'er had failed
  Sweet comfort to impart,
And now again one thought prevailed—
  To soothe her breaking heart.

To think of her had ever been
The habit of His Mind,
And ne'er a cloud had come between,
Or act or word unkind.
And now in this His hour of death,
For her He doth provide,
And ere He breathes His latest breath,
Himself for her denied.

He drives her gently from her post,
That she may not behold
Her Blessed Son give up the ghost
In agony untold.
He knows Himself what is to come,
The darkness and the thirst,
And tenderly He sends her home
Ere pain has reached its worst.

It must have been a loss to Him
His Mother thus to spare,
And see no more the outline dim
Of Mary standing there.
And 'twas for Him a double loss,
His friend must leave Him too,
While He must finish on the Cross
The work He came to do.

To know their hearts in bitter grief
Though powerless and dumb,
Were aching there to bring relief
Did surely help to numb
The pain which o'er His Spirit rolled
When all did Him forsake,
And must have somewhat then consoled
The Heart about to break.

And yet, to save another pain,
He even now will rob
Himself of this—and lonely drain,
Amid the careless mob,

The cup of anguish—proving thus
That as His life He gave
And all He prized, to rescue us
"Himself He could not save."

They spoke those words in bitter scorn,
But true they were indeed,
And those who had His Life-Blood drawn
Expressed a priceless creed;
For had He saved Himself that day,
The world had sunk in night,
And fallen man had lost the way
To everlasting light.

And now in small things as in great,
He sets Himself aside,
And would not let His Mother wait
And watch Him till He died.
He thought, too, of the days to be,
And her great loneliness,
And lost in love and sympathy,
Forgot His own distress.

The Saviour thought, too, of His friend,
The friend who loved Him so,
Whose heart the pangs of sorrow rend
Beneath the weight of woe;
He gave him duties to fulfil,
Which shall his mind employ,
That in the doing of His Will
He might find peace and joy.

How full His words of teaching are,
How much therein expressed,
In love and thought exceeding far
What man could e'er suggest!
So few, and yet do they contain
A world of tender care,
And make His loving purpose plain
To those who watched Him there.

Part II.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."—St. Luke xvi. 10.

Come let us stand and watch the curtain rise,
And see the picture now disclosed to view,
And gazing at the scene before our eyes,
Learn much to rouse and strengthen us anew.

For we at times are weary of the load
Of daily duties which around us throng,
And heavy grows the yoke and hard the road
And much we need some help to make us strong.

We see an Eastern village far away,
And at a humble door a Mother sweet
Stands watching o'er her little Child at play
With other children down the village street.

We change the picture and we see the Child
Fall o'er a rugged stone upon the road,
Placed there by other boys who, rough and wild,
Laugh rudely when they see the blood which flowed.

We see Him stand again upon His Feet,
And with the gentlest look that e'er was seen,
He turns to them—and then in accents sweet,
He makes excuses for their action mean.

And all through boyhood's years whate'er there came
To try His patience or His courage test,
He ever on Himself took others' blame,
And was of all the boys the manliest.

If while He learnt to use the saw and plane,
The hammer, nail and chisel day by day,
Some slight mischance occurred which caused Him pain,
He bravely wiped the rising tears away.

Thus love and self-control ruled every hour,
And through the little things of daily life,
He grew in wisdom, fortitude and power,
And thus prepared Himself for coming strife.

Long ere the cruel nail had pierced His Hand,
Or deep temptation had His Heart assailed,
He learnt in Nazareth to take His stand,
And fought a thousand battles and prevailed.

And there, through self suppression year by year,
Intenser grew His purpose and His strength,
Till, filled with zeal Divine which knows no fear,
He gave His life upon the Cross at length.

'Twas in His humble home He learnt to say:
"Father, forgive, they know not what they do,"
And where for years, to reverence and obey
Had been His law, He self-forgetful grew.

When later He that wondrous truth expressed,
Which joy has brought to many a weary soul,
*That those who faithful are and do their best
In lesser things, shall greater ones control,

A law of natural consequence He gave,
And did not speak alone of rich reward;
They rulers grow who are in trifles brave,
And thus gain strength, for great occasions stored.

We rise not in a moment to the height
To which we may at last by grace attain;
They win the greatest victories in the fight
Who triumph day by day o'er toil or pain.

Oh think not ye, who idly sit and dream,
Or spend your days in soul-destroying ease,
Ye can heroic be in hours supreme,
And all untutor'd, victory's laurel seize.

* St. Matt. xxv. 23.

Leave vanities and dreams, and come aside,
And watch the Saviour now in Nazareth,
Where day by day His *will* He crucified,
And learnt in silence how to meet His death.

Go on, brave mother, with your daily work,
Go on, and while you labour thus, grow great,
Let no rebellion in your bosom lurk,
To make you common duties underrate.

They may be irksome, aye, and thankless too,
But deep and precious lessons they may teach,
And from them you may gain endurance true,
And holiness, and strength of purpose reach.

Press on, brave boy, who will not feebly yield
To every inclination youth dictates,
For days will come when in the battle field,
O'er fiercer foes a greater triumph waits;

For surely as you conquered, hour by hour,
And rose above occasions in the past,
Shall you, indwelt by concentrated power,
Confront your Tempter or your Cross at last.

Part III.

"*What I say unto you, I say unto all.*"—St. Mark xiii. 37.
"*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My Words shall not pass away.*"—St. Luke xxi. 33.

When we reproof or counsel give,
Content are we if those will heed
To whom we speak, who wisdom need,
And look not that our words shall live.

But 'tis not so with words Divine;
They live for ever, and are meant
For all, and are a message sent
Which shall in fadeless letters shine.

Thus when the Lord His silence broke
To speak to Mary standing there,
All women His injunction share,
To every mother's heart He spoke.

My sisters, Jesus speaks to you
From Calvary's Cross, as much as when
He spoke to her, and now, as then,
Sound still those solemn words and few.

To you He turns His love-lit Face,
His thorn-crown'd Head and tear-dimmed Eye,
And from your God about to die,
Come words which time can ne'er efface.

"Woman," He saith, 'behold thy son,'
The child which to thine arms was giv'n,
See to it that thou train for Heav'n
And win for Me that little one.

Be loving, patient, strong in prayer,
Nor fail to give correction just;
Thy children are a sacred trust,
Committed to thy tender care,

'Behold thy son'! He looks to thee
To teach him what is good and pure,
The lessons learnt in youth endure
Through time and through eternity.

On Thee each day he doth depend
To make his home a Heav'n on earth;
Thine arms they are which, from his birth,
Should him from sin and harm defend.

Thy words and actions he will weigh,
And deep impressions they will make,
Which he through all his life will take,
And which will ever with him stay.

Ideals high or low he gains
Of what a woman ought to be,
Through daily intercourse with thee,
And this the model he retains.

A man of pure and loving mind,
Who doth all holy things revere,
Learns first to hold his mother dear,
And sees through her all womankind.

What love looks out from children's eyes!
How much from mothers they expect!
Say then, shall sin or cold neglect
Cause disappointment to arise?

Is there a more pathetic sight
Than that of some poor little lad,
Who once a loving mother had,
Whose loss to him was infinite?

Alas, the answer must be "yes."
For there can sadder death-knells toll,
More touching memories o'er us roll,
Of children worse than motherless.

The death of love, the reign of sin,
Are tragedies a hundredfold
More terrible than what are told
Of flashing sword and battle din.

And 'tis not thy sweet babes alone
Who suffer at thy cruel hands,
When lower things make their demands,
And set up in thy heart their throne;

The taint of good or evil thou,
To generations yet to come,
Art handing down, and they the sum
Make up of what thou doest now.

Shall it be said at last by Me :
" Behold thy son "—a helpless slave
To vice, which brought him to the grave,
Inherited, alas, from thee ?

My Voice from Calvary pleadeth still,
That thou should'st pause and count the cost,
And pray for grace, ere all is lost,
To strengthen thine enfeebled will.

Gird up thyself to watch and pray,
Toil on, for thou art not alone ;
I see thy struggles from My Throne
And will thy earnestness repay.

Inherent tendencies in thee,
Which thou with courage dost suppress,
Grow in thy children less and less,
Till from the taint their blood is free.

Think of the time when they shall rise
And call down blessings on thy head,
That thou didst train their feet to tread
The path which leadeth to the skies.

And when the battle day is done,
And child and mother meet at last
At My right hand, when life is past,
Thou shalt with joy ' behold thy son.' "

* * * * * * * * *

But did not Christ the Saviour send
A word to children too that day,
A word which ne'er shall pass away,
Though heav'n and earth shall have an end ?

Ah yes, for when to John He spoke,
And Mary to his tender care
Committed, as they watched Him there,
A sense of filial love He woke.

"Behold thy mother!" O how few
Those simple words—but yet how plain
The meaning is that they contain;
A wealth of love and teaching too!

He toiled for her in Nazareth,
Her gentle voice He there obeyed,
While working at a humble trade,
And now forgets her not in death.

Do *you* remember, day by day,
The mother who has borne for you
Both pain and toil you never knew,
And ceases not for you to pray?

From infancy her loving care
Surrounded you from morn till eve,
Your slightest suffering made her grieve,
In all your joys she took a share.

There are some mothers whom we know
'Tis hard for children to revere,
On such we are not dwelling here
But would another picture show,

Of tender mothers, good and sweet,
Whose hearts for love and kindness ache,
And oft with disappointment break,
Through all the cold neglect they meet.

Forgive these words, nor judge them hard,
O readers of my simple page,
Their truth is proved in every age
By many homes which thus are marr'd.

For there are sons, and daughters too,
Who do not heed their mother's voice,
And fail to make her heart rejoice,
And such perhaps were some of you.

If this is so, and if for aye
The voice is still'd you once disdain'd,
And ears are deaf that oft were strain'd
To hear kind words you did not say,

And you such days can now recall
With sorrow and with vain regret,
Seek not your hardness to forget,
But on your knees confess it all.

They have no peace who blind their eyes
To all the evil they have wrought;
Peace only comes with pardon—sought
In tears which from true sorrow rise.

The past can never now return,
But you can wise and humble grow,
And by your care for others, show
You can from failure something learn.

And you who still have mothers here,
And have occasion yet to give
Them love and reverence, while they live,
See to it that you hold them dear.

For darker days can never dawn
Than those on which the "passing bell"
Tolls out its note of sad farewell
For precious mothers that are gone.

And those who have been left behind
Learn, though the world may yet contain
Much love and joy to soothe their pain,
They can no second mother find.

Then mark the words that Jesus said
And do not for the future wait,
Lest self-accusing, all too late,
Shall come when those you love are dead.

" Behold thy mother ! " Make her days
More free from weariness and care ;
Of all her burdens take a share,
And fill her heart with joy and praise.

" My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? "—
St. Matt. xxvii. 46.

PART I.

" The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."—
Isaiah liii. 6.

O Blest Redeemer, scarcely can we dare
To touch upon Thine agony extreme,
When words of bitter anguish rent the air,
And pain and woe had reached their height supreme.

It seemeth almost sacrilege to try
To speak at all of what those words convey,
Or dwell upon th' exceeding bitter cry
Which desolation drew from Thee that day.

A darkness, deep and awful, veiled Thy Form,
That none should look upon Thy tortured Face,
Nor eyes, profane and hard, behold the storm
Which did Thy God-bereavèd Soul embrace.

Then deep should be the reverence and awe
With which this Sanctuary of grief we tread,
As those who fear, and yet who long, to draw
Near one they love upon his dying bed.

What is it causes Thee to suffer thus
Such pain of soul and spirit on the Cross ?
Must Thou too *this* endure to rescue us,
And save a fallen race from endless loss ?

Ah yes, for nails and Cross and piercing thorn
  Could not have made the sacrifice so great ;
He must from God's Companionship be torn,
  And bear that hour, the blackest sinner's fate.

The torn and tortur'd Limbs and bleeding Head,
  The burning, feverish thirst and riven Side,
Did not complete the offering in our stead ;
  His *Soul* and *Spirit* must be crucified.

And all who deem God's favour passing sweet,
  And know what joy and peace His children gain
In His dear Presence, resting at His Feet,
  Count severance from their Lord their deepest pain.

And if *we* mourn, who are at times bereft
  Of that sweet sense of nearness to our God,
What must the Lord have felt when He was left,
  And when the winepress of God's wrath He trod ?

What must have been the pain to His pure Soul,
  The sinless One, Whose Blood for man was spilt,
To feel the desolation o'er Him roll,
  And take upon Himself the sinner's guilt !

Despised, oppressed, afflicted, full of woe,
  With grief acquainted and with Visage marred,
There yet were deeper depths for Him to know
  When He from God's felt Presence was debarred.

The human race in Him was gathered up,
  And every sin and every foul offence
Were laid on Him, in that most bitter cup
  Which He must drain, in clouds and darkness dense.

We cannot dream that God, the Holy One,
  Whose Love is greater than the ocean wide,
And Who above all loved His Blessed Son,
  And suffered with Him, when for man He died,

Should all that grief and agony require
Before we sinners can forgiveness find,
Or could His Son condemn to such a fire
Of taunts and insults to redeem mankind ;

Nay surely it was not the bitter pain
That Jesus bore, which restitution made,
But His *obedience* that did pardon gain,
Which was to man's account and credit laid.

When He Who knew no sin, did yet consent
To bear man's sin, no other end could be
To such a step, but death and chastisement,
And this He bore to set the guilty free.

He gave Himself—He was not forced to die,
And in His *willingness* did God delight,
And when He left His Father's Throne on high
He did Himself with fallen man unite ;

For in His Person all the human race
Has paid the penalty that sin demands,
And God the Father sees, in Jesu's Face,
A world's obedience to His just commands.

'Twas disobedience ruined man's estate,
When Adam took the sweet forbidden fruit ;
The second Adam by obedience great
Becomes a full and perfect Substitute.

And not alone on bitter Calvary
Was man's Redemption by the Saviour won,
But in His dark and drear Gethsemane
Where He obeyed—and said : " Thy Will be done."

His bruisèd Body and His piercèd Side,
And all that did His cup of suffering fill,
Redeemed mankind because they testified
To that which lay behind—a yielded Will.

The climax now was reached when, as of old,
The scape-goat in the wilderness was left,
And all the sins of men on Christ were roll'd
And He was of sweet fellowship bereft.

He still could cry, amid His bitter loss:
"My God, My God," but this was far indeed
From what He said when stretched upon the Cross
And did for those who slew Him intercede.

'Twas "Father" then He said—O precious word!
Expressing intercourse and friendship sweet,
But now from out the dark a cry is heard
Of One Who doth a Judge severe entreat.

O "why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—Ah why?
In awe and wonder is the answer given:
"Dear reader, He was left that you and I
Might not be left—but find a place in Heaven."

Part II.

"I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God."—Psalm lxix. 3.

Come let us now return
And hear those words again,
And see what lessons we can learn
From Jesu's cry of pain;
And may the teaching fill
Our hearts with hope and peace
When we too climb our Calvary's hill
And light and joy decrease.

For toilsome is the road
By which we oft are led,
And many sink beneath their load
As Zionward they tread.

And some lose heart and hope,
And faith grows faint and dim,
While others in the darkness grope
For God, yet find not Him.

All care and deep distress,
All misery and fear
Are bearable—but loneliness,
When God seems not to hear—
Is agony indeed
That rends the heart in twain,
And makes the inmost spirit bleed
In deep, unceasing pain.

When hope within us dies,
And joy in prayer has fled,
And troubled questionings arise,
By Satan's whispers fed;
When every duty palls
Which is before us set,
And we are glad when darkness falls
And sleep makes us forget,

When God seems far away,
And hard to seek and find,
When listlessly we try to pray,
With sad and doubtful mind,
And things Divine and true
Grow all intangible,
And hidden from our clouded view
By fears unspeakable;

Then wakes the bitter cry
Which sets the spirit free:
"O God, my Heav'nly Father, why
Hast Thou forsaken me?"
And though we cry in pain,
It is to One Who hears,
To Whom none ever turned in vain
For solace in their fears.

Now let us try to give
Some reasons for this grief,
That we no more in darkness live
But find some sure relief.
Sometimes 'tis broken health,
Sometimes 'tis want of prayer,
Sometimes 'tis love of ease and wealth
Which causes this despair ;

And often saints must tread
This path in doubt and fear,
And feel that all their hopes are dead,
And God is nowhere near.
O let us courage take,
Let hope revive again,
God shall the light of morning make,
*Clear shining after rain."

*2 Samuel xxiii. 4.

" *Every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.*"—
St. Luke vi. 40.

We read of saints and holy men of yore,
Who now amid the Heav'nly host adore,
Who passed through desolation deep and sore,
In doubt and fear ;

'Tis easy when we see the light divine
Upon our toilsome way in radiance shine,
And never lack from God some precious sign
That He is near ;

'Tis easy then to work and bravely fight,
And in the law of God to take delight,
But when the darkness falls—and it is night—
O Saviour hear !

To stumble blindly on to find a Hand,
To wander through a dry and barren land,
Like one who thirsts upon the desert sand,
So vast and drear.

To pray and pray and seem to pray in vain,
To make appeal and yet no answer gain,
Until at last the Soul cries out in pain:
"There's none to hear,"

Is suffering which we never can forget;
Though time may pass and many suns may set,
It lingers in the heart and memory yet,
From year to year.

But saints in every age are called to tread
At times this lonely path, and thus are led
To gain sweet fellowship with Christ their Head,
Unseen but near.

Their Master passed before this gloomy way,
In darkness shrouded, on that awful day,
When on the Cross He hung, without a ray
Of light to cheer.

And those who closely in His Footsteps press,
May have to face like Him this wilderness,
And feel forsaken in their deep distress,
And shrink with fear.

But those who are triumphant in the fight,
And still hold on, while waiting for the light,
And trust, and cling to God with all their might,
And persevere,

Emerge at length upon a higher plane
Than they could e'er have reached or hoped to gain,
Had they not groped their way, in doubt and pain,
To daylight clear.

And on their spirit falls a Heavenly calm,
As once again they feel God's circling Arm,
And heart and soul pour out their chant and psalm
In Jesu's Ear.

Take courage, saint of God, whoe'er thou art,
Should'st thou be called by Him to come apart,
And lonely struggle with a bleeding heart,
And none to cheer.

When Saint Theresa passed this dreary wild,
She heard at length a whisper soft and mild:
"I was not far, but close beside thee, child,"
Then banish fear.

The Lord of glory goeth on before,
And hath for thee yet many things in store,
Which thou must learn in patience, more and more
Through suffering here.

O Saviour Christ, Who when on Calvary's Tree,
Didst pass through untold suffering for me,
Help me in life and death to cling to Thee
In faith sincere.

"*They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*"—Jer. ii. 13.

"*Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.*"—Jer. xiii. 16.

Now though the picture we have drawn gives pain,
A sadder one than that we still may see
Of souls forsaken through their own disdain
Of Love poured out by Christ on Calvary.
Not saints alone endure this sense of loss,
But those who in their pride despise the Cross;

Who love the world and all its passing show
  Who seek to find in pleasure peace and joy,
Whose hearts are never touched by others' woe
  Because their all for self they do employ ;
And so as days and months and years go by
The Holy Spirit's pleadings they defy.

And thus through life their hearts and minds are set
  On all this world's gay pomp and vain display,
And in pursuit of pleasure they forget
  There comes a time when these things pass away,
And they must face the soul they have ignored,
And be alone with it and with their Lord ;

The Lord Who bought them, Whom they never knew,
  The soul which they have starved and left to die,
They now must meet, and meet as strangers too,
  For in the past they did such claims deny.
The things of God upon their spirits pall,
Their ears are deaf, and slow to hear His call.

Their pleasure gone—and worse—they do not care
  For things which they had made their god before,
They simply wait in listless, dull despair
  Till life and all the misery are o'er.
They know not how to pray, for dead and numb
Has all capacity for God become.

We speak to them of hope if they repent,
  But all we say falls on unheeding ears,
For hard it is to make a heart relent
  Which has the voice of conscience spurn'd for years.
O awful and heart-rending is the fate
Of those who put repentance off too late !

*We take God's Holy Word and find it written three
†That man can "grieve," "resist," and "quench" the love
‡Of God the Holy Ghost, Whose earnest prayer
Ascends "with groanings" to the Throne above;
O sinner let this solemn thought sink down
And barter not for earth thy heavenly crown.

* * * * * *

O Blessed Jesu, may I now bewail
My love of self and all my worldliness,
And may Thy Blood which doth with God prevail,
Cleanse me from sins which I in grief confess;
That I may find when pleasures pass away
That Thou, O Christ, art still my hope and stay.

"*Thou restrainest prayer before God.*"—Job. xv. 4.
"*Our backslidings are many.*"—Jer. xiv. 7.
"*I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.*"—Hosea xiv. 4.

Now there are many Christians who, we hear,
Have times of darkness too upon their way,
Because they sleep, and must be roused to fear
And feel their danger if they cease to pray;
Who through neglect have listless grown and dead,
And find for secret prayer no time or place,
And, filled with earthly things, have failed to spread
Their every need before their Father's Face.

For great and many duties round them press,
And prayer and praise they often set aside,
And outer things grow strong and faith grows less,
And indistinct becomes the Crucified.
It even may be work for God they do,
Or homely duties may their time employ,
But lawful work may sometimes hide from view
The Lord Who is the Spring of lasting joy.

* Eph. iv. 30. † Acts vii. 51. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 19.

They " rise up early and they late take rest "
To seek those things which round their hearts entwine,
And worldly cares or wealth destroy the zest
They used to feel for intercourse Divine.
Thus day by day the tide resistless takes
Them further from the " Way," the " Truth," the
" Light," ;
Until at last the soul within them wakes
And cries for God—but finds that all is night!

They have forsaken God, and God would teach
Them lessons that their minds can ne'er forget,
And so withdraws Himself beyond their reach,
Because their hearts on earthly things were set ;
He leaves them for a while in darkness drear
To feel forsaken and to cry in pain :
" My Lord, my Well-Belovèd, is not here,
I call aloud but seem to call in vain ! "

*They went astray in their own foolishness,
But found no city fair wherein to dwell,
And hungry, thirsty, faint—in their distress,
They to the Lord their sin and sorrow tell ;
For He the empty soul doth satisfy,
And filleth every hungry soul with good
Which doth in darkness sit and misery,
Where deathlike shadows joy and light exclude.

Against His word they had in sin rebelled,
And lightly disregarded counsel sweet,
And now through heaviness of heart compelled,
They lay their burdens down before His Feet ;
And God their spirits out of prison brings,
And breaks asunder every prison gate,
And all the air with praise and homage rings,
While heart and voice His benefits relate.

* Psalm 107, verses 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, 22.

Though for a while the things which pass below
Have power the mind to fill and satisfy,
The man who once has learnt with joy to know
The precious sweetness of the mystic tie
Which can between the soul and God exist,
Can never long endure from Him to part,
Or suffer earthly things to veil in mist
The Saviour Who before filled all his heart.

And let us note that we may ofttimes lose
The personal touch with Christ, so sweet and dear,
E'en while on holy things we sit and muse
And to religious forms and rites adhere ;
For did not Joseph go, and Mary mild
To Zion, taking part in Feast and prayer,
But yet 'twas there they lost the Holy Child,
And there they found Him too with toil and care.

And surely this a striking picture draws
Of those who join in prayer and Ordinance,
And in the letter keep God's holy laws,
While in their hearts there is but cold response ;
For they have let the things of sense creep in,
And worldly interests heart and mind control,
Or worse—perchance have harbour'd secret sin
Which shuts God out from reigning in the soul.

And now they must—as Jesu's Mother did—
Return the way by which at first they went,
And find the Holy Place where Christ is hid,
The sacred House of Prayer and Sacrament.
And there with other worshippers who pray,
And in their quiet chamber too, alone,
In tears and penitence must fight their way
To joy and peace, so long to them unknown.

But they in humbleness of heart must wait,
And climb with painful steps the upward road,
And " ask " and " seek " and " knock " at mercy's gate
Before they find their Saviour and their God.
God doth not in a moment make reply,
For earnestness of purpose He will prove,
But He at length the soul will satisfy,
For God is full of mercy, full of love.

* * * * * *

O Holy Father, humbly I confess
How I have slighted Thee by cold neglect,
For oft my faith is weak, my love grows less,
And e'en in prayer I do in grief detect
A want of full surrender to Thy Will
And much which grieves Thy Holy Eyes to see ;
O may my heart with deep contrition fill,
And keep me, Lord, from falling back from Thee.

" *O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not ; and in the night season.*"—Psalm xxii. 2.

" *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him.*"—Psalm xxxvii. 7.

" *They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint.*"—Isaiah xl. 31.

Another reason why we feel despair
Is when deep troubles come,
And we no answer see to earnest prayer,
And all the Heavens seem dumb.
We ask in faith, and yet have no reply,
Until at length our hope and courage die.

Yet God knows all the secrets of the heart,
  And how our spirits bleed,
And richer, higher things He would impart,
  Supplying deeper need.
For full surrender to the Lord's behest
Brings greater joy than gaining our request.

Our trials He at times doth not remove
  Till we have nobler grown,
For He permitteth suffering in His Love
  That He, and He alone,
May reign within, and lift our spirits higher
Than they could rise if granted their desire.

A thought which brings sweet comfort to the mind
  When we are sore oppressed,
Is that which we in Holy Scripture find,
  In story there expressed ;
The story of the storm, when Jesus went
To Gadara, on loving work intent.

A hundred helpful lessons we may learn
  From this short narrative,
But may the one in every bosom burn
  Which here we seek to give :
It is that Jesus, even during sleep,
Approaches all unknown across the deep.

We see on Gadara's coast the victim rave,
  A terror to mankind,
Yet He, the Mighty One, with power to save,
  Who seeks until He find,
Draws nearer, nearer through the blinding storm,
Though Gadarenes see not that sleeping Form.

O trust His Love—He cometh soon or late
  Thy trouble to relieve,
And for the pain He will thee compensate
  If thou wilt but believe ;
To save the *one* He did the crowd dismiss,
When heart and spirit fail, ah think of this.

He teacheth thousands who around Him throng,
  And feeds the multitude,
But we indeed should Jesu's mercy wrong
  If from it we exclude
The single soul, whose bitter cry of pain
From Jesu's Heart ne'er meets with cold disdain.

* * * * * *

O Saviour when my days are dark and sad
  And troubles round me press,
And no sweet voice I hear to make me glad
  And cheer my loneliness,
Do Thou across the wave my sufferings see
And come through wind and storm to succour me.

"*Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.*"—Isaiah l. 10.

"*Looking unto Jesus.*"—Hebrews xii. 2.

One final word to those who sit and pine
  And feel despair because they look within,
Who every thought and feeling do define
  And contemplate themselves and all their sin.
    To such in earnest tones we say :
    O unto Jesus, look away.

They deem it must be right themselves to blame
For all their past misdeeds and foolish pride,
That ne'er can mortals feel sufficient shame
That they in bygone days their Lord denied.
To such in pleading tones we cry:
Christ's Blood doth sinners justify.

With heart disconsolate and downcast eyes,
They think their day of grace is past and gone,
They spend their precious hours in tears and sighs
And even wish that they had ne'er been born.
To such in loving tones we preach:
None go beyond the Saviour's reach.

They say their faith is cold, their hearts are dead
That they no longer have the power to pray,
That all their hope for future joy has fled,
And light has gone which changes night to day.
With these in longing tones we plead
That Christ supplieth every need.

We tell them, those who feel this sense of night,
And grieve because they think the Holy Ghost
Has taken from them His eternal flight,
Thus show, of joys, they prize God's Presence most.
They would not long for Him, or mourn,
If His good Spirit had withdrawn.

There is a "prince of darkness" watching near
And he would have you think that you are lost,
And that to God you are no longer dear
Though Christ redeemed you at such fearful cost.
O look away—for feelings cheat,
In Him your ransom is complete.

O cease to probe your feelings, look to Him
Who stands with Arms outstretched and waits for you,
Who on the Cross was left in darkness grim
And sent a message, faithful, sweet and true:
"O ye who are by guilt opprest
Come unto Me and find your rest."

If Satan can prevail your eyes to win
From looking at the Saviour and His Love,
He cares not if you dwell upon your sin
Or what it is that doth your gaze remove
From that dear Lord Whose Blood alone
Doth for your every sin atone.

We all have sinned and all may well regret
Our thousand falls and failures in the past,
But Jesus has on Calvary paid the debt
And no repenting soul away is cast.
O come, O come, do not delay,
He is "the Truth, the Life, the Way."

We linger on this theme and find it hard
To cease our pleading with dejected friends,
We long that they no more should feel debarred
From claiming promised peace that never ends.
To them one last appeal we make:
God pardons all for Jesu's sake.

* * * * * *

O Saviour of the lost Whose Love Divine
Did follow, seek and save Thy erring child,
And made Thy great obedience stand for mine,
And hast to God all sinners reconciled,
O let no Tempter veil my sight
From mercy which is infinite.

"I thirst."—St. John xix. 28.

The time is now far spent
And Jesus speaks once more,
Two little words of deep intent
Which we must ponder o'er;
From dying Lips these words pathetic burst,
And Jesus in His anguish saith: "I thirst."

It is the last appeal
He makes to stubborn hearts,
And for their sakes doth not conceal
The pain His thirst imparts;
His cry of need to all those standing by
An opening gives to help Him ere He die.

His parchèd Mouth doth burn
With human thirst, 'tis true,
But more than that He thirsts to learn
That in that reckless crew
A drop of love, to quench a deeper need,
May yet be found His thirsting Soul to feed.

Will no one's heart be stirred
To come to His relief,
When from the Cross that cry is heard
So touching and so brief?
We look—and lo, we see a stranger run
To succour and befriend God's Holy Son!

A Roman soldier brings
A sponge of sour wine,
And gives it to the King of kings
To cool His Lips Divine.
The vinegar and gall He would not take
But this doth thirst of Soul and Body slake;

For love doth lie behind
The offering poor and small,
And in this doth not Jesus find
A worth surpassing all?
The man was touch'd, and Jesus understood
That though 'twas small, he offered what he could.

And doth not this suggest
A thought which brings relief
To troubled minds which cannot rest
And are consumed with grief
Because they do not feel that they repent,
Or love their Lord with earnest, deep intent?

They long for tears to flow,
To feel contrition sore,
For hearts with deeper love to glow
Than they have felt before;
But God accepts the best we have to bring,
Our wish to bring Him more acknowledging.

*Our hearts He looks upon,
And marks their deep desire,
And deems not that all love has gone
Though lacking zeal and fire.
†They love the Lord who do His Will obey,
And walk in His commandments day by day.

The coarse and common wine
The Roman soldier brought,
Our Blessed Lord did not decline
Because the act was fraught
With sympathy and kindness on his part,
And testified to love within the heart.

* 1 John iii. 20. † St. John xiv. 21.

And everyone that tries
And longs to love Him more
His thirst relieves and satisfies
Though that sad day is o'er.
For still He thirsts upon His Heav'nly Throne
To make the kingdoms of the world His Own.

While lifted on the Tree
Before His Mind there passed
A vision of Humanity
Saved by His death at last,
And with that thought His Heart with longing burst,
And from the Cross rings out that cry of thirst.

He thirsts for Heathen Lands,
And still to sinful men
He stretches out His wounded Hands
To-day as much as then ;
Nor can His longing Soul be satisfied
Till all the nations own Him far and wide.

And on, from sphere to sphere,
Resound from Calvary's Cross
Those words of our Redeemer dear
Who counted all as dross,
Compared with precious souls that never die,
Designed to live and reign with Him on high.

O reader of these lines,
The Lord of glory still,
To bring salvation, thirsts and pines
As when on Calvary's hill ;
Have you your sins and sorrows humbly laid
On Christ who for your guilt Atonement made ?

* * * * * *

O great ascended Lord,
Give me a thirst divine
To make Thy Holy Name adored
And quench that Thirst of Thine ;
Make me to have Thy glorious cause at heart,
And long Thy truth and knowledge to impart.

Give me the ear to hear
Thy longing cry of old
And make my love and faith sincere,
My heart and spirit bold,
That I Thy Thirst a little less may make,
And gladly suffer loss for Thy dear sake.

Accept my off'ring poor,
Scant love that ill repays
The pain and grief Thou didst endure
For me in bygone days ;
O give repentance, humble, deep and true,
And may Thy Spirit quicken me anew.

"**It is finished.**"—St. John xix. 30.

It is finished ! It is finished !
Man's Redemption is complete,
All the life of toil is ended,
Christ with Satan hath contended
Man can now the foe defeat.

It is finished ! It is finished !
All the air with triumph rings,
Angels gaze in awe and wonder,
Gates of Heaven burst asunder,
Christ to man salvation brings.

It is finished ! It is finished !
All the work He came to do,
Miracle and holy teaching,
All the poor and sinful reaching,
Giving faith and hope anew.

It is finished! It is finished!
Nothing can be added now,
Jesu's Blood for ever pleadeth,
Man a full forgiveness readeth
Written on that bleeding Brow.

It is finished! It is finished!
Now in peace He breathes His last,
He no longer feels forsaken,
All the powers of Hell are shaken,
Sin's dominion now is past.

It is finished! It is finished!
Satisfaction has been made
Through the Man of Sorrows dying,
And with Blood the ransom buying;
All our sins on Him are laid.

It is finished! It is finished!
God the Father in His Son
Sees the human race collected,
Sees it now from Hell protected,
Adam's shameful Fall undone.

It is finished! It is finished!
Now upon His Kingly Throne
Is the Son of Mary seated,
God and Man in Him completed;
We our great Redeemer own.

It is finished! It is finished!
See the ancient Law decay,
Types and sacrifices vanish,
Jesus doth their purpose banish,
Takes by dying death away.

It is finished! It is finished!
Now the veil is rent in twain,
God hath now our pardon granted,
Jewish rites hath Christ supplanted,
Triumphing through death and pain.

But His work is never finished,
He for man doth intercede;
Still He lifts His Hands in blessing,
Still He prays for those transgressing,
He our great High Priest indeed.

Finished pain and finished sorrow,
Finished God's redemptive plan,
But that work on Calvary ended,
Must in us now be extended,
Christ must live again in man.

Saviour, in Thy mighty power
Finish all Thy great design,
Take our hearts and reign within them,
From the world and Satan win them,
Make them holy, make them Thine

That at last when life is ending,
And our haven comes in sight,
We may say that all is finished,
Work completed, sin diminished,
Victory won, though hard the fight.

It is finished! Jesus triumphs,
Endless joy that theme affords.
To the Cross our sins He naileth,
Fights within us and prevaileth
"King of kings and Lord of lords."

"Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit."—

St. Luke xxiii. 46.

Once again is silence broken,
One more word by Christ is spoken,
Giving to the world a token,
Peace now reigneth there.

Let us now the holy meaning
Of that precious word be gleaning,
On the Heav'nly Wisdom leaning,
Seeking God in prayer.

Reverently the Saviour bendeth
His dear Head, and now commendeth
Soul and Spirit, ere life endeth,
To His Father's care.

"Father," was the word appealing
He had used, when men unfeeling
Struck the blows which won our healing
On the Scaffold bare.

Conscious of that sweet relation,
He could bear the execration,
Of the stubborn, heartless nation
Standing round Him there.

But alas, in later hours
He must close with evil powers,
While the darkness round Him lowers,
Sunk in deep despair.

O what joy we feel when hearing
Jesus use—no longer fearing—
Once again that word endearing,
Word of sweetness rare!

With it He began, when praying
For His cruel murderers, saying,
As our ransom He was paying:
"Spare them, Father, spare."

Now again, we hear Him crying:
"Father," still in faith relying
On His perfect Love, when dying,
And His tender care

"*Our Father.*"—St. Matt. vi. 9.

A picture this presents of many lives—
A mother leads her child to think of God
As Father—and with care she gently strives
To guide his steps where she herself has trod.
He learns to say, in lisping tones and sweet,
The Lord's Own Prayer, while kneeling at her feet.

And thus the morning of our life begins
With having in the heart a consciousness
That God our Father loves us, sees our sins,
Marks all our steps and cares for our distress;
We fear Him too, for we are taught to feel
That we can nothing from His Eyes conceal.

But then come later days, when sin or woe
Or love of this world, veils the Father's Face,
When we for years, it may be, careless grow,
Or pass through darkness, doubt, or e'en disgrace;
Then God our Father seemeth far away
And we, through sin or sorrow, cease to pray.

As when a mother sits beside her child
Till balmy sleep his eyelids gently close,
And still stays near and prays that undefiled
He may be kept, and guarded from his foes,
And he awakes while she is still in prayer
And joy lights up his face to find her there—

So we begin by taking God's dear Hand,
But gradually relax our loving hold,
And wander through the bare and desert land
Of sin or unbelief or love of gold,
Till we awake, as from a dream at last
To find our Father there when night is past.

A patient Father, Who will never fail
To watch for and await His child's return ;
O may such wondrous love and care prevail
To make the heart with deep devotion burn ;
For God the Father, Whom we loved in youth,
Is ever near, and changeless in His truth.

Yet even Jesus, sinless, spotless, pure,
Must on the Cross each sad experience know,
And must estrangement from His God endure,
And bear the sinner's punishment and woe ;
But " Father," at the end, He cries once more
When separation, grief and pain are o'er.

* * * * * *

Holy Father, rich in blessing,
Hear us as we come confessing
All our sin and past transgressing,
Doubt, and want of prayer.

Bring back all who now are straying,
Rouse all those who cease from praying ;
Who Thy laws are disobeying,
Holy Father, spare.

Take their stubborn wills and bend them,
In their wanderings still befriend them,
Messages of mercy send them,
Save them from despair.

May they come at last confiding
In Thy Love and Heav'nly guiding,
In the Rock of Ages hiding,
Finding shelter there.

"Into Thy Hands I commend my spirit."

Psalm xxxi. 5. (Prayer Book version.)

When life with all its joy and work is o'er,
Its sorrow and its pain,
And to our view shines out the Heav'nly shore
Which we have longed to gain,
How sweet it is our spirits to commend
To One Who all through life has been our Friend.

But this can only come in fullest sense
To those who all their days
Commit themselves to God's Omnipotence,
And walk in all His ways.
Who on their God at every step rely
Find 'tis not hard to trust Him when they die.

No awful Presence waits them, strange and new,
To them as yet unknown,
But One that dearer and more precious grew
When earthly joys had flown.
*The promise of their Saviour they believed,
And in the strength of His dear Presence lived.

On God's eternal truth they took their stand
Through each perplexing hour,
Commending all to His unerring Hand,
His Guidance, Love and Power.
And death to them is but a drawing near
To Him Who was their sweet Companion here.

We must not think that at our journey's end
We perfect peace shall find,
Unless through life we do to God commend,
In humbleness of mind,
Ourselves, our work and all we love below,
And strive in union with our Lord to grow.

* Matt. xxviii 20.

Sweet is the peace which holiness doth bring
When life's long day is past,
And when the meeting with our Lord and King
Draws very near at last.
His welcome will a thousand times repay
The weariness and burden of the day.

O precious Saviour, teach us more and more
To know Thee as our Friend,
That when we reach the bright and Heav'nly shore,
Where troubles have an end,
We may for ever in Thy Love abide
And wake up in Thy Likeness, satisfied.

CONCLUSION.

All the pain is past and over,
All the life of toil is done,
Now the Angel's song of triumph
Hath begun.

We, with hush'd and reverent footstep,
Must in silence now withdraw
From the Saviour's Cross and Passion,
Filled with awe.

We have stood and watched Him suffer,
All His loving words have heard,
And our hearts with grief and wonder
Have been stirred.

He has prayed for those who slew Him,
He has saved the dying thief,
He has soothed His holy Mother
In her grief.

He has passed through awful darkness,
When our sins on Him were laid ;
We have heard Him too, when thirsting,
Call for aid.

Now at last when all is finished,
And in peace the end draws near
He His Soul to God commendeth,
Free from fear.

Jesu Christ, while yet we linger
Near Thy Cross in earnest prayer,
Pour on each Thy Heav'nly blessing,
Kneeling there.

As we gaze upon Thy wound-prints,
May we all our guilt deplore,
Trust and love Thee, Holy Jesu,
More and more.

Grant us deep and true repentance,
Fill our hearts with love to Thee,
As we hear Thy sevenfold message
From the Tree.

May our sins be all forgiven,
Through Thy wounds and riven Side,
May we be with Thee, in spirit,
Crucified.

Amen.

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